



May 2006

ZOOM

IN ON THE USA

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BUILD BIG

A story of U.S. cities



America's cities: finding their own identity

The growth of U.S. cities captures the USA's history:

- The grand movement westwards across the continent started in the early 1800's from the old colonial cities along the Atlantic Coast.
- 19th century industrialization and urbanization, linked with mass European immigration from Ireland and then eastern (Russia and Poland) and southern (Italy) Europe, created inner city multiethnic melting-pots.
- A sweeping post World War I movement took African-Americans escaping the poverty and discrimination of the rural South to the metropolises of the North and West.
- Post World War II flight from city centers created the surrounding suburban sprawl, followed later (in the last 20 years) by an inner city revival.
- A steady flow north to the U.S. of Hispanic immigrants from Latin America continues to this day.

Leaving the countryside

According to the first U.S. census in 1790, some 95% of Americans lived in rural areas such as farms. By 1860 at the outbreak of the Civil War 80% of the population still lived in rural areas. Even the rapid industrialization and immigration after the Civil War, the 1900 census showed that 60% of the U.S. population still resided in the countryside. It was not until 1920 that a greater proportion of Americans (52%) lived in urban centers than in rural areas. Today some 80% of Americans, 222 million according to the 2000 census, live in cities.

The beginnings, always tough

Although U.S. cities started to develop in the 18th C., it was really the 19th C. with its rapid industrialization that gave their growth real momentum. The colonial era trading seaports along the Atlantic Coast gave way to early factories with their accompanying tenements housing squeezed into ugly blocks, lacking in hygiene. People, overworked and tired by the monotony of factory work, were unable to beautify their surroundings.

Fashionable downtown

The downtown area became the dwelling place for the poorer workers, who could not afford to pay for transportation. Apartment blocks grew taller and taller to

house more and more tenants. Those who had sufficient means built their homes outside the city center. Thus downtown areas as well as the suburbs were acquiring their character. In both a regular gridiron pattern of houses and streets is striking, especially if looked at from the air or seen on the map.

Territorial expansion

City sprawl is one of the results of this American style of building. The city suburbs expanded penetrating deeper and deeper into the surrounding rural areas. As a result, the continuous city sprawl gave birth to megalopolis - a highly urbanized area, within which the boundaries between different cities naturally disappear. Renovation of downtowns and building ultra modern apartment blocks in city centers has led to upgrades, making centers once more the living heart of the city's artistic, shopping, and even recreational center.

Welcoming to all

What distinguishes U.S. cities from many others in the world is their racial and cultural diversity. The mixing of people from such different backgrounds does sometimes lead to conflicts, but most of the time it is an enriching experience for all. And in a land where most inhabitants either have or have foreign roots, nobody should feel like a stranger.

Text by AIRC Krakow. Revised by IRC Madrid



*Pittsburgh celebrates the arrival of the new millennium,
Photo © AP/WWP*

New York City

Vibrant, inspiring, artistic, stylish, exciting, beautiful, sophisticated, quick, crowded, imaginative; with a population of 8,084,316 people, NY is the biggest American city.

In the past:

- It was named New Amsterdam by the Dutch settlers in the 17 C.
- The island of Manhattan was bought by Peter Minuit from Indian tribes for 60 guilders.
- It was the site of the deadliest terrorist attack in the U.S., on September 11, 2001.

Nowadays:

- It is the artistic, educational, financial and business center of America.
- It boasts the lowest crime rate of any big city in the U.S.

NYC



Photo by Slonecker

Name: EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

Age: 75 (on May 1, 2006)

Address: Fifth Avenue (between 33rd and 34th Street), NYC, USA

Height: 1,250 feet (381 meters)

Description: One of the most famous landmarks of New York City and a fine example of art deco. The steel framework is covered with panels of limestone and an alloy of chrome, nickel and steel. Steplike shapes—called setbacks—lift this building, once the tallest in the world, high up in the air. Tourists can enjoy full-scale panoramic views from the observatory, housed at the top of the Empire State Building. There is a both glass enclosed pavilion and an open air promenade. Naturally, most people visit both!



Detroit, Michigan

- Is the tenth biggest city with population of 925,051.
- Has the city motto: "We hope for better things" and "It shall rise again from the ashes" which refers to the great fire of 1805, that destroyed the whole community.
- Is one of the "Top 50 Fun Cities" according to Cranium - the ranking factors included the number of sports teams, toy stores and restaurants in each city.

DETROIT



Models with a Ferrari FXX at North American International Auto Show, Detroit, Photo ©AP/WWP

- At the turn of the 20th C., Henry Ford, Ransom E. Olds and John and Horace Dodge changed the nature of Detroit forever by making it the center of the automobile industry.



Facts about big American cities on the basis of "America's Top-Rated Cities: A Statistical Handbook", Grey House Publishing, 2005

BIG CITIES

BRIEF FACTS

SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio, Texas

- "Remember the Alamo" - the cry once symbolizing the Texas Revolution against Mexico in 1836, is now uttered in an entirely peaceful context as part of the greatest festival in Texas - *Fiesta San Antonio*.
- The eighth largest city in the United States, San Antonio's culture combines that of Native Americans, Old Mexico, Germans, the Wild West, African-Americans and the Deep South.
- It is warm, picturesque, historic and romantic.



Fiesta royalty King Antonio LXXXI M. Robert Eversberg, left, and El Rey Feo Tom Sineni visit the Alamo during the opening ceremony, Photo ©AP/WWP

BIG CITIES

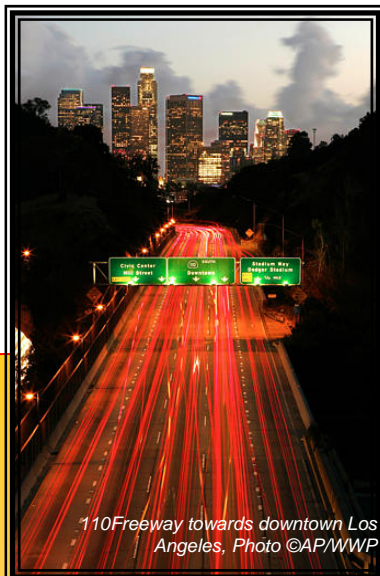
BRIEF FACTS

BIG CITY LIGHTS

Benjamin Franklin was a man of many professions and skills. A statesman, a scientist, an inventor, a printer, a social activist, this truly versatile man was also the post-master of Philadelphia. In his many activities he contributed a great deal to the safety and appearance of streets in American cities. He introduced street lighting making Philadelphia the first American city to wear an alluring, brightly-lit and colorful night attire.

At first these were simple candles put inside boxes that lit up the streets. They were later replaced by gas lighting. With Thomas Edison's invention of light bulbs the era of modern street lighting began.

Today, when efficiency and economy are in great demand, high-intensity discharge lamps and sodium vapor lamps are used extensively. The original ones are housed inside special non-crystalline glass tubes filled with gas and metals and produce light by striking an electric arc across tungsten (formerly wolfram) electrodes, while the U-shaped tube in the second type contains sodium metal and a small amount of neon and argon.



110 Freeway towards downtown Los Angeles, Photo ©AP/WWP

LOS ANGELES, California

- Starting with a humble beginning of 44 inhabitants in 1781, today it is the second largest American city with a population of 3,798,981 people.
- LA is the proud owner of a star-studded community, HOLLYWOOD. Three quarters of all films made in the US are produced in the LA area.
- It is one of the most racially diverse cities in the US.
- The Sun shines on 325 days a year (or ... 326 during a leap year).

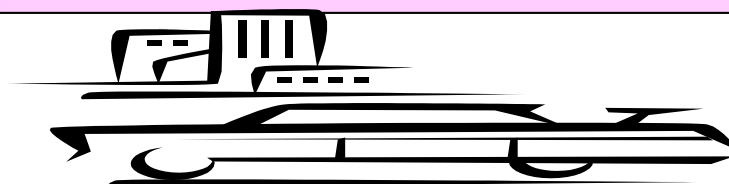


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Chicago, Illinois



- Chicago nicknames include, 'The Windy City', 'City of Big Shoulders', 'That Toddling Town', and 'The Second City'.
- Is a bustling metropolis of nearly 3 million people in the heart of the golden Illinois prairie.
- Is the birthplace of the world's first skyscraper (1885) and modern cellular phone system (1983).
- Is home of 78 Nobel Prize winners - an unmatched world record.
- Is a city with four real seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter.



downtown Chicago during a rain shower
Photo ©AP/WWP

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What Do U.S. Citizens Think About Their Cities?

"San Francisco is both a small city and a very large one. The city is compact, measuring 10 kilometers on a side, and is home to just 750,000 people. At the same time, San Francisco is the center of the huge and rapidly growing San Francisco Bay Area, where dozens of towns and cities have grown together to create one continuous urban area with a total population of approximately 8,000,000 people that stretches for 100 kilometers along the coast north and south of the city of San Francisco itself. Since its founding, San Francisco's beautiful setting, mild climate and youthful atmosphere have made it a magnet for people looking for a new home -- both Americans and people from overseas. As a result, a visitor is likely to hear nearly every language of the world while walking along its famously hilly streets. The mixing of cultures in San Francisco has created a unique environment in which everyone appears to enjoy sampling their neighbors' cultures and cuisines."

- Kenneth Fairfax

"Strip away the fake image-based neuroses of Los Angeles and you'll find the real image-based neuroses underneath."

- Patrick Horne

"New York is the city for which they invented the phrase, It's a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there."

- Patrick Horne

For information on American cities visit this page: <http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-tx.cfm>

Win a Prize!

To win a prize answer this question:

In the streets of which U.S. city would this be a natural sight?



Send your answer to
irc@embusa.es

Give your name and address.

The deadline is
June 15, 2006

The winners from the previous issue will soon receive their prizes by mail.

ZOOM

IN ON THE USA

About ZOOM

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EXERCISE 1:

Here is a list of 10 fastest-growing American cities with their populations (as of July 1, 2002) and the growth rate percentage (as provided by the U.S. Census Bureau). Find the cities on the map and identify which states they are in:

1. GILBERT - 135,005, 22.8%
2. NORTH LAS VEGAS - 135,902, 17.7%
3. HENDERSON - 206,153, 17.3%
4. CHANDLER - 202,016, 17.3%
5. PEORIA - 123,239, 13.4%
6. IRVINE - 162,122, 13.3%
7. RANCHO CUCAMONGA - 143,711, 12.5%
8. CHULA VISTA - 193,919, 11.7%
9. FONTANA - 143,607, 11.4%
10. JOLIET - 118,423, 11.4%

Glossary

In the order of appearance:

1. **proximity** - nearness to something or somebody
2. **intricate** - something that has many patterns or details
3. **melting-pot** - a place or situation in which people or ideas of different kinds gradually mix together
4. **gridiron** - in a pattern of straight lines that cross each other forming squares
5. **versatile** - someone who has many different skills
6. **alluring** - very attractive
7. **sample** - taste a small amount in order to see if you like it
8. **cuisine** - the style of cooking typical of a country or region
9. **toddle** - walk unsteadily with short quick steps (used especially about a child)

Answer to "Win a Prize" in the April Issue:
The phenomenon illustrated by the picture was: THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

Congratulations to the April Winners

EXERCISE 2:

At a Construction Site

Supply the missing letters in the words below. All words are connected with building construction. The first letter and the definitions have been provided for you. In brackets the number of letters is given:

1. I - - - - (6) - a device used to climb up
2. S - - - - - (8) - a frame on which wood is held during sawing
3. C - - - - (6) - sticky substance of clay or limestone used to form concrete
4. I - - - - - - (10) - material that protects house against loss of heat
5. S - - - - - - - (11) - a tool used for turning screws
6. h - - - h - - (4+3) - special headgear that protects a worker's head
7. B - - - - (5) - a block of hardened clay used for building walls
8. B - - - - (5) - a piece of timber sawed thin
9. L - - - - (5) - a device used for adjusting something to a horizontal surface

EXERCISE 3:

What do they refer to?

All of the expressions, words and/or figures have appeared in this issue of "Zoom in on the USA". Without looking back at the texts do you remember what they refer to and/or which cities they describe?

1. 1805
2. That Toddling Town
3. 325
4. Peter Minuit
5. The Alamo
6. Ransom E. Olds
7. 78
8. Hispanics
9. 44

Find answers to activities on this page at www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html